

TOPIC Altensburg Airfield 25X1

EVALUATION	25X1	PLACE OBTAINED	25X1
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DATE OBTAINED 25X1 DATE PREPARED 30 July 1952

REFERENCES

PAGES 2 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

REMARKS

1. [] exercises involving tanks, ground troops and air force troops with parachutists were regularly held in the Leina Forest east of Altenburg. About 4:30 a.m. on 20 and 21 June, three formations, each of 5 twin-engine planes, and a flight of three larger twin-engine planes, each towing a cargo glider, were observed over Altenburg heading toward Gera-eimar. The cargo gliders, which were fitted with wheels, were slightly smaller than the conventional towing plane. The 18 aircraft and 3 towed cargo gliders again crossed Altenburg at 6:20 a.m. At 7 a.m., they were observed flying toward Gera-eimar from where they returned at 9:10 a.m. At 11 a.m. on 27 June, about 20 twin-engine aircraft were observed at Altenburg airfield. There was intensive air activity.

2. At 4 a.m. on 21 June, 5 Li-2s were observed over Altenburg heading west. Subsequently, additional Li-2s flew in the same direction. Aircraft towing cargo gliders were also observed. On 24 June, 26 Li-2s and 3 IL-12s were parked at the field. At 9:50 a.m., no flying activity was observed in unfavorable weather. Firing was practiced with dismounted aircraft armament. At 7:10 a.m. on 27 June, 25 Li-2s flying in formations of 5 headed west coming from the direction of Altenburg airfield. At 7:40 a.m., 15 Li-2s were observed flying in flight formations. Between 8:50 a.m. and 9:40 a.m., 32 Li-2s, 2 cargo gliders and 1 IL-12 landed at the field. Personnel descended, and baggage was unloaded from the planes. After these aircraft had landed, 43 Li-2s which were being refueled were counted at the field. Aircraft observed approaching from the west and landing at the field included 2 transports with 2 cargo gliders at 1 p.m., 10 Li-2s flying in two formations of five at 1:40 p.m. and 7 Li-2s at 1:55 p.m.

3. On 30 June at 9:10 a.m., 50 Li-2s and 3 IL-12s were counted at the field. On the same day, a camouflaged bivouac area and soldiers wearing red-bordered black opaullets were observed in a small woods near the field. Four trucks and one gun were counted. Aircraft observed on 2 July included 3 transports each towing one cargo glider which landed at 8:05 a.m., 21 Li-2s flying in formations of 7, and 15 Li-2s flying in formations of 3. The bivouac was no longer there. Between 11:10 a.m. and noon on 3 July, 25 Li-2s and 3 IL-12s, each towing one cargo glider, landed at the field coming from the west.

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5. Every day after 27 June from about 3:15 a.m. until nightfall, about 200 aircraft crossed the Zeitz area coming from the east and heading west. On 30 June, more than 250 aircraft were counted. According to an informant, a former pilot, the aircraft observed were transports.*

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Comment. The report confirms previous information on large-scale air landing exercises in the Altenburg-Zeitz-Weimar area, which were held between about 19 June and early July 1952. It is unclear whether the exercises still continued on 3 July. According to previously observed shipments, elements of both corps of the Eighth Gds Army participated in the exercises including elements of the 2d Mecz Regt of the 20th Gds Mecz Div, which bivouaced at Altenburg airfield during the exercises. Besides the aircraft of the air transport regiment in Altenburg, the exercises also involved IL-12s with cargo gliders and additional Li-2s which must have arrived from outside the Soviet Zone of Germany. About 60 transports and some cargo gliders participated in the exercises. The large number of 250 aircraft observed by source 3 is undoubtedly due to the fact that source counted the same aircraft several times when flying over the area. No details have been reported on the landing of cargo gliders.

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